



PLAY STRATEGIES

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Neurodiversity-
Affirming

Play
Protagonist

Child-
Led

Anti
Bias

Mood Movements

In 2015, it was identified that 91% of children failed to meet the UK Physical activity guidelines (HSE, 2015). Sedentary behaviour or restricting movement can have significant impact on health and well-being.

Moving through moods recognise that children need to use their full bodies to regulate stress hormones, and as educators, we recognise that restricting movement can lead to further build ups of stress. Try the following to move through moods:

1. Have brain boost prompts so that when a child becomes stressed, you can offer to do an activity together, for example star jumps, dancing or heavy work for grounding.
2. Use tactile sensory items such as massage rollers which will support the child to become calm.
3. Try heart rests where the child lies on their back with their legs elevated which eases pressure on the heart and nervous system.



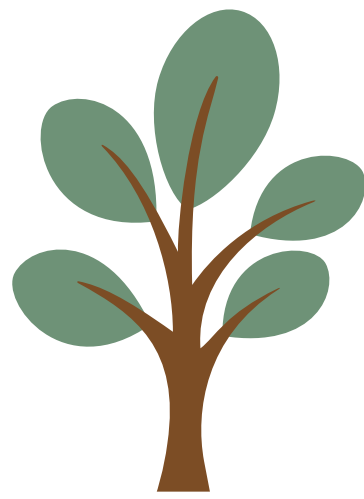
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MOOD MOVEMENTS



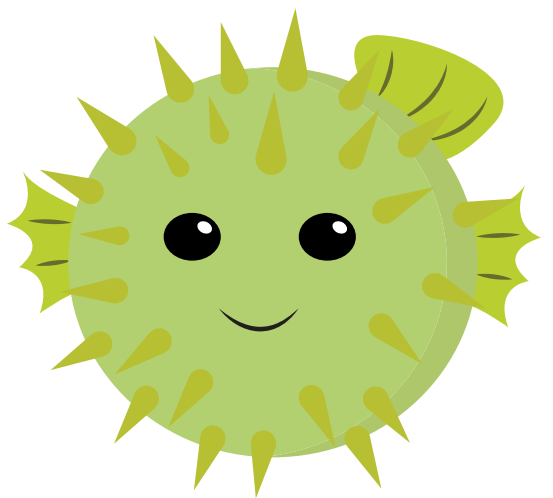
Stretch like a starfish



Grow as tall as a tree



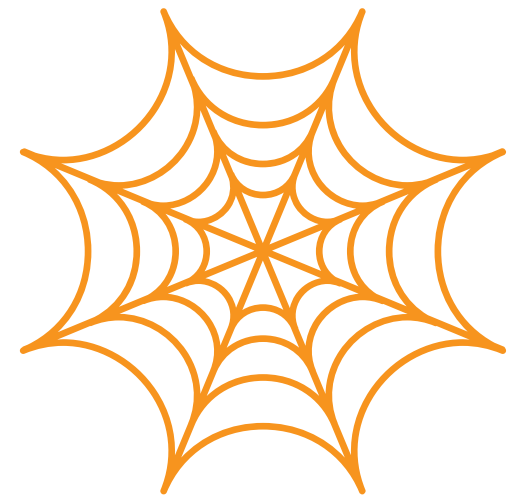
Draw a rainbow



Do the puffer fish



Disco Dance



Spider Legs

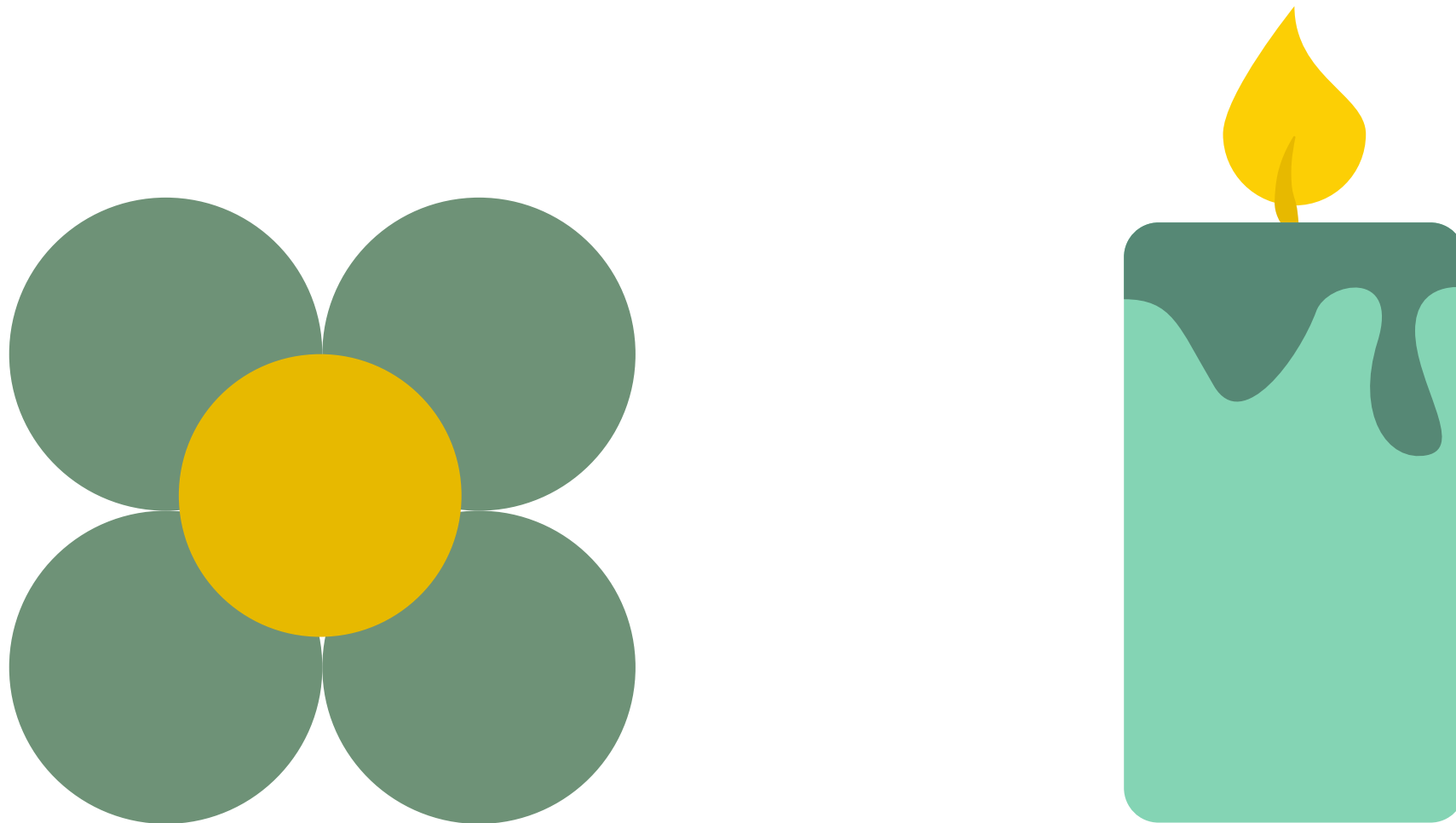
Have a little box with the brain boosts inside, and explain to children that when they feel stressed, they can select a brain boost to release the stress in their busy body



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The Flower & The Candle Meditation



What we want to ensure for all children is that they can use strategies to manage their own feelings. This meditation experience is useful when children become stressed or worried, and helps to regulate and calm their breathing.

1. Ask the child to imagine that they have a flower in one hand, and a candle in the other.
2. Suggest that they sniff up the flower, hold their breath for a moment, and then blow out the candle.
3. Repeat for as many times as desired.
4. The next time the child becomes upset, remind them of this technique so that they can recognise moments of stress and respond to them.
5. It is also important to talk to children about what stress may feel like so that they understand why their breathing becomes busy.

MIRROR & MODEL



We still see too much of this...

Imitation is an important skill for observational learning and is an important building block for more complex skills. Educators should begin by mirroring to ensure that children are in control of their play....

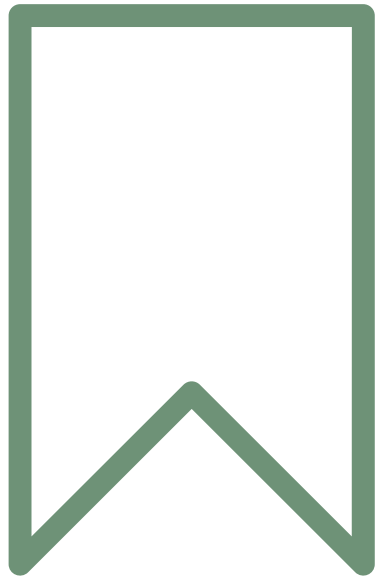
1. Simply mirror the child's play and match the level of play- this is really useful for play skills that do not take a "normative" approach because it helps you to see the child's perspective
2. Model - remember this should be a small step
3. Provide positive reinforcement in the child's preferred communication style
4. Choose toys that can serve a different number of function



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